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ABSTRACT

Drawing upon the experience of the Boston Project, the monograph discusses the provision of technical assistance to large urban school systems particularly in relation to the collaborative relationship between state education agencies (SEAs) and their respective local education agencies (LEAs) in complying with P.L. 94-142 (the Education for All Handicapped Children Act) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Section I, on the need for technical assistance, discusses four premises: large cities need major external technical assistance, technical assistance should focus on total organizational renewal, SEAs should provide leadership, and SEAs and LEAs should reexamine attitudes and practices related to collaborative action. Sections II and III present a case study in the provision of technical assistance in a large urban school system (Boston). A fourth section outlines a technical assistance process model which involves eight time specific phases (preliminary negotiations: needs assessment: goal setting: model building: task, strategy, accountability specification: implementation: outcome evaluation: and recycle/reprogram) and five generic activities (legitimation, process evaluation, decision recording, task and strategy reprogramming, and change agent training). A table offers phase by phase explications of the technical assistance process model. A final section addresses operational requirements and technical assistance considerations in Boston Project replication. Appended is a table of renewal targets and cycle specifications. (SBH)

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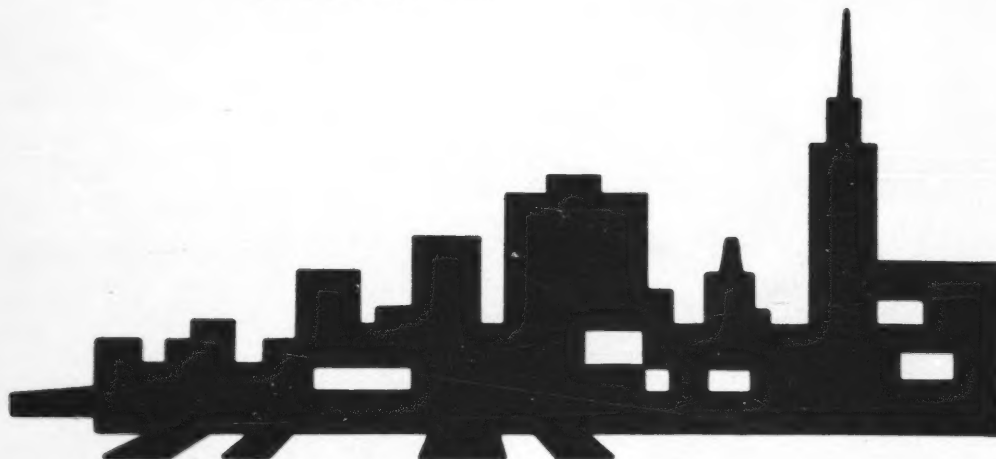
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SEA's and LARGE URBAN LEA's

An Approach to Collaboration and Technical Assistance

By
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**National Association of State Directors
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**COUNCIL OF ADMINISTRATORS
OF SPECIAL EDUCATION,
INCORPORATED**

A DIVISION OF THE COUNCIL FOR EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN

PREFACE

A very real challenge to Public Law 94-142, and to the twenty-year effort to establish legal and procedural guarantees for handicapped children, is now being confronted in the nation's large urban school systems.

Basically, these school districts are contending with the well-known implementation challenges of Public Law 94-142 at the same time a multiplicity of other demands for specialized services are being made: enrollments and budgets continue to shrink, professional and non-professional staff costs escalate, and, among other problems, taxpayers' ability/willingness to support their schools decreases. While these realities may be familiar to most school district leaders they are most prominently evident to those of the urban cities.

If the promise of the law is to be realized for a significant percentage of the country's handicapped children and youth — those residing in urban school districts — a greater understanding and appreciation of the complexities of urban special education administration and programming must be achieved. Beyond understanding, effective means of providing help to our cities' schools must be identified and initiated. Toward that end, state education agencies' (SEAs') and large city local education agencies (LEAs') special education leadership must work collaboratively toward meeting their common goals.

To date, little has been written about the cities and Public Law 94-142. Even less has been published regarding the critical relationship between SEAs and their respective large cities. This monograph is offered as an important step toward filling those gaps.

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OVERVIEW

The purpose of this monograph is to assist state education agencies in working more collaboratively — and productively — with large city school systems. P.L. 94-142 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, along with recodified state statutes, are requiring dramatic changes in educational practices, particularly in special education. Under P.L. 94-142, state education agencies (SEAs) are responsible for ensuring compliance by local education agencies (LEAs) with requirements for mandated programs and services. Upon determination of non-compliance, SEAs must initiate administrative action, withhold special education entitlement funds, and/or provide services. Additionally, the U.S. Office for Civil Rights has the expanded authority under Section 504 Regulations to withhold all federal support dollars from an agency or organization not in compliance.

Large urban LEAs, with great concentrations of handicapped students, overburdened tax bases, and complex bureaucracies, pose one of the great challenges to meeting the intent of these laws. Few efforts have addressed the need for specific planning and/or improvement in delivery of SEA assistance to these systems.

One organized effort to provide technical assistance to a large city school system is the Boston Project, sponsored by the Massachusetts State Department of Education, which recently completed its third and final year of operation. The Boston Project's technical assistance approach provided a mechanism and a process to facilitate that city's significant progress in complying with state and federal special education laws.

The Boston Project offered a common vehicle for cooperative problem-solving between the SEA and its largest city school system, and it is recognized as a potential model for SEA/large city school district collaboration to improve educational programs for handicapped students in urban centers. This monograph draws upon the experiences of the Boston Project in discussing the provision of technical assistance to large urban school systems, and is divided into five sections:

- I. THE NEED FOR TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE IN LARGE URBAN SCHOOL SYSTEMS**
- II. THE BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS:**
Case Study of the Need for Technical Assistance in a Large Urban School System
- III. THE BOSTON PROJECT:**
Provision of Technical Assistance by a State Education Agency
- IV. BOSTON PROJECT REPLICATION:**
Technical Assistance Process Model Requirements
- V. BOSTON PROJECT REPLICATION:**
Operational Requirements and Technical Assistance Considerations.

Section I

THE NEED FOR TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE IN LARGE URBAN SCHOOL SYSTEMS

The changes which P.L. 94-142 and Section 504 require of most large city special education departments boggle the imagination. The basic mandates demand adoption of new and expanded service delivery roles and behaviors to replace decades of underfunding, understaffing, and frequently under-directed program development.

The laws — particularly P.L. 94-142 — prescribe specific responsibilities for SEAs with regard to monitoring LEAs in providing a free appropriate public education to all handicapped children and youth. Pressure on SEAs to ensure compliance at the LEA level is increasing and promises to intensify with compliance review activities by the U.S. Bureau of Education for the Handicapped and the Office for Civil Rights now firmly in place.

SEAs are charged, over and above their role as compliance monitor, to respond to findings of non-compliance by providing help and/or initiating administrative and/or legal enforcement strategies. Official SEA-large urban LEA exchanges have often been limited and in some cases counterproductive, with cross-fire charges of ineptness and lack of understanding for each other's roles and functions. This tension threatens to accelerate under the demands of new federal and state mandates.

The three-year Boston Project, described in Section III, has documented changes in Boston's special education delivery system that suggest a potentially effective technical assistance model. Four premises for the provision of technical assistance to large city school system special education units, emerging from the Project's experiences, suggest that:

1. Large city school system needs are more complex than those of smaller school systems, and most will need major external technical assistance to meet the letter and the spirit of P.L. 94-142 and Section 504;
2. An effort to provide technical assistance in complying with the law and developing quality programs should, in most city school systems, focus on a three-to-five year total organizational renewal effort, rather than on particular problem components or specific programs;

3. SEAs should exercise leadership to provide or ensure the provision of the necessary technical assistance support; and,

4. SEAs and large city LEAs need to re-examine and modify their philosophy, policies, attitudes, and practices related to how they communicate and collaborate with one another in order to strengthen the potential for collaboration.

The following discussion examines each of the four premises, based on insights and experiences garnered by Boston Project staff during the past three years of work with the Boston Public Schools, the Massachusetts Department of Education, as well as other large city LEAs and SEAs.

Premise #1 — Large Cities Need Major External Technical Assistance

Most school systems, regardless of size, are experiencing difficulty in complying with P.L. 94-142 and Section 504. While all will need some form of technical assistance, there are important differences between small town or city and large urban school districts. Many of these differences are apparent, but their implications for the pace and quality of change are not as apparent and have been explored infrequently. Some of these differences are:

A. Complexity of Large School Systems - When compared with smaller school district programs, large city districts and their special education units are obviously more complex. In addition to sheer size, other factors adding to the complexity of large city programs include:

- (1) The rapidly shifting demography of most cities, with increases in aged, poor, minority, and disadvantaged persons;
- (2) The rapid change in student population characteristics, with a higher prevalence of those who are educationally disadvantaged and/or handicapped;
- (3) The declining tax base due, in part, to the outward migration of industry, business, and more affluent residents; and,
- (4) The increase in direct court involvement as city school districts fail to keep pace with the multitude of legal mandates requiring expanded services to a multi-varied constituency.

Internally, large city school systems are also more complex, rendering change more difficult. Within most cities, for example, there are typically hundreds of individual school buildings of all sizes, along with thousands of teachers, principals, and other staff. In many cases, due to the influence of neighborhood demography, individual schools and/or sub-sets of schools are less representative of the district as a whole than they are of the individual mores/style/culture of the specific smaller geographic area. In addition, individual schools have their own unique history, with leadership and teaching modes reflective of their history.

The net result is that the city school system is, for all practical purposes, many sub-systems, with the unique characteristic of each neighborhood and school(s) requiring attention in any system-wide effort to deliver consistent programming. Where system-wide efforts must be somewhat standardized because of external legal standards, as is true with programs for the handicapped, the required planning is typically complex and monumental.

Another complicating factor is the overall size, complexity, "layering," and characteristic instability of city school systems' leadership, administrative, and management systems. Where major internal organizational change and responsiveness are required (as in efforts to meet even the minimum requirements of P.L. 94-142) meaningful involvement of the different associate and assistant superintendents, program and/or service directors, affirmative action specialists, area superintendents, administrative advisory bodies, and others, requires detailed and careful planning and communication totally beyond that required in a less complex system.

Turnover in school system leadership personnel is more prevalent in large city school districts. The reshuffling of titles, positions, and incumbents by new Superintendents or other top administrators creating their "own" organization causes communication confusion and planning hurdles. Such a reality requires a well-defined internal special education planning structure, and the objectiveness or detachment of external technical assistance providers.

B. Political Problems - Another major consideration in large city school systems demanding considerable management attention is the area of organizational politics. For example, a major political force within city school systems is the teacher bargaining unit. In programs such as special education, where law and/or definition of "contemporary professional standards" requires rapid organizational change, use of a new and evolving technology, and redefinition of many roles, functions, or titles, the matter of teacher union participation is both a practical and a political matter. In many cases, the potential is great for conflict between the imperatives of change and the "guardian" or protective status of teacher unions.

There are also major political problems inherent in a situation where one part of the organization is obtaining additional resources, while others are losing resources. This is especially true with the many city-wide special interest and neighborhood pressure groups. It is not uncommon for a rapidly evolving city special education organization to suffer forceful backlash from other departments and administrators who believe they are required to "do the work" while special education is "empire building." Special efforts are required to prevent this reaction or at least to cope with it in a constructive manner. In most cases, external technical assistance would help to maintain objectivity and to avoid or defuse potentially counter-productive "contests."

C. Categorical Model in Special Education - Contributing to the change puzzle in large cities is the typically categorical nature of the special education administrative structure. Historically, special education supervisory staff have been employed to develop, maintain, and monitor programs in categorical or disability-oriented program areas such as "programs for the educable mentally retarded." This type of administrative/supervisory model reflects the funding and reimbursement patterns dictated by state and federal laws, regulations, and/or practice.

Generally speaking, however, this categorical supervision/leadership model is (1) inconsistent with the P.L. 94-142 and Section 504 required continuum of services model, and (2) inappropriate in light of contemporary knowledge about organizational behavior and effective personnel and other resource utilization. Thus, reorganization and renewal of most large city special education management and supervisory systems, for the purpose of developing functional rather than categorical models, is a primary, priority requirement.

D. External Agency Relationships - Recent public policy modifications have changed other human service delivery systems; thus, making more complex the delivery of large city special

education programs. The emphasis in the past decade on community-based services and deinstitutionalization has required city school systems to develop a whole new set of formal relationships and communication patterns. Halfway houses, group homes, day activity centers, rehabilitation centers, foster parent facilities, intensive care facilities for the handicapped, among other resources, have proliferated in almost every urban center. Cooperative programs with corrections, welfare, and mental health/mental retardation agencies are more in evidence. The planning and organization required to coordinate these community agency and service facilities, and for developing the related school programs, are typically less than adequate in most city systems.

E. Lack of Coordinated Planning - On another dimension, every large and complex organization requires a formal, ongoing, short and long-range planning effort. Yet, few organized planning efforts exist in large city school systems or in their special education units. Most urban special education programs have hundreds or thousands of personnel providing educational services to the handicapped in a hundred locations or more. Combined federal, state and local support for all of these programs extends into the hundreds of millions of dollars.

With such resources, one would expect to find a well-defined and coordinated planning effort in every large special education department. In fact, few such departments actually do more than day-to-day, situation-to-situation planning, and the most visible planning is usually conducted in a crisis atmosphere related to a court or legislative order or charge. One of the principal and most critical factors related to city school systems' non-compliance with P.L. 94-142 and Section 504 is the lack of a defined, systematic, and coordinated organizational planning effort.

There are two major reasons for this general lack of planning. First, most city special education directors and their leadership cadre are generally program specialists by training and experience and have had little or no formal management training. They generally have few well-honed planning skills and, by and large, do not assign priority to the development of a short and long-range planning system.

Second, most city special education organizations, particularly at the administrative, management and supervisory levels, typically operate on a crisis basis. There never seem to be enough resources; someone is always filing a law suit; the federal and/or SEA forms are past due; student evaluations are backed up; the personnel department has not issued a contract to the last bilingual psychologist in the country and (s)he cannot wait any longer, and so on.

Under these circumstances, many of which result precisely because of a lack of planning, it is extremely difficult to find time to develop a planning system. Management personnel, however, can be trained in the philosophy, models, and technology of organizational planning, and ways can be arranged for assigning priority to the development of a planning system. A primary vehicle for doing so is the utilization of external technical assistance.

An issue related to the lack of planning is the availability of an adequate information base for use in making management decisions. For some smaller special education organizations, a formal computer-based management information system may or may not be essential. But for a large city special education program, it is a critical necessity because of the scope, amount, and complexity of data required for making appropriate management and program decisions. City special education administrators have had little training and/or experience with management information systems. Thus, they generally are not aware of available

technology or the relationship between the decision/planning process and current retrievable data. In addition, most city school system data management and computer departments are utilized primarily for financial and personnel reporting purposes. Therefore, little time and/or resources are available for the development and operation of a specialized data management system for special education purposes. These problems can and must be managed with a defined technical assistance effort.

F. Inadequate Program Space - Another problem facing special education administrators, and particularly those in large cities, is that of providing adequate physical space for special education programs and related services. Typically, city school buildings are old, overcrowded and, in many cases, vandalized. From a special education point of view, they are replete with architectural barriers. A plethora of new alternative education, title programs, and other general education programs vie for available space.

Among this heavy competition, special education administrators search for appropriate space, and are often unsuccessful. The past several years of declining enrollments have not been of much help in opening up space; previously overcrowded facilities expand to fill available space, and many old buildings are taken off the line to save money or because they are unfit for further use. Those facilities that are available often have few or no regular elementary or secondary students, and thus are not usually suitable for special education purposes given P.L. 94-142 and Section 504 integration requirements. The most successful programs are those which have developed a long-range plan for physical facility needs and which establish aggressive strategies to implement the plan. Development of both the plan and the implementation strategies can be facilitated by external technical assistance.

G. Ineffective Organization of Clerical Personnel - The organization, management, and supervision of a large cadre of clerical service personnel is another often ignored problem faced by special education administrators in large urban school systems. Most suburban and rural single district and cooperative programs have two or three clerical/secretarial personnel. Large city special education programs typically have 10 to 15 or more central office clerical personnel, and again as many more in the schools for field-level support professionals. Very rarely are the clerical support personnel organized for maximum effectiveness and efficiency and, as a result, the effort to manage the paperwork jungle and to maintain communications with field and other personnel falters. Experience has shown that in most city school systems, improved organization of existing personnel, use of modern technology, training for staff, and other techniques can improve clerical staff output by 40% to 70% or more. Most administrators are not trained or knowledgeable in the philosophy or technology of effective clerical service delivery systems. The time required for analysis of need and for redesign of overall clerical organization, role and function, supporting systems, office space, and other functional areas is too great for most on-line administrators to manage without technical assistance. The proper and efficient utilization of clerical service resources has been given too little priority in the management of most city special education programs, and represents one area where organizational effectiveness can be improved without great additional cost.

Premise #2 - Technical Assistance Focus on Total Organizational Renewal

In most large city school districts, the special education management organization is generally (1) a product of persons (general and special administrators) relatively untutored in the

science and application of the principles of organizational development; (2) a conglomeration of inadequately defined and coordinated administrative, management, and supervisory roles created in response to the urgency of major program growth; (3) operated in the absence of a formally-defined short and long-range planning process; (4) fairly crisis-oriented, with administrators cast primarily in a reactive role rather than a prospective one in relation to organizational and program development; (5) governed by a "compliance" rather than "quality" perspective on program design and operation; and, (6) poorly understood by school principals and other school administrators. In addition, a major problem shared by most large special education organizations is that, historically, their leadership systems have developed as categorical or disability-oriented systems; a direction which is clearly incompatible with current trends toward decategorization and toward development of a "continuum model" of service delivery.

Obviously, not all large city special education organizations suffer from all of these problems, and these statements are not intended as an indictment of all large city special education leaders or organizations. However, most of these characteristics are endemic to large city special education organizations.

The premise, then, is that most large city special education programs require major organizational analysis and renewal. This major renewal must take place either prior to or concurrent with renewal-oriented technical assistance for specific service programs or for specific problems (e.g., the need for improved physical facilities or for an upgraded student transportation system). Short-range, immediate improvements in specific programs or problem areas, in the absence of total organizational renewal, are generally difficult to create, and even more difficult to maintain.

An organization poorly designed and ill-prepared to create, support, and sustain internal innovation is basically regressive. From the standpoint of long-term organizational health, and the need to spend scarce technical assistance dollars in a cost-effective manner, any program and/or situation-specific technical assistance effort should take place within an overall renewal effort.

Premise #3 - SEA Should Provide Leadership

Education is the responsibility of the state, with local school districts acting as agents of the state in local-level program development and delivery. While the operation of schools may be delegated to LEAs, the responsibility for ensuring a uniform, quality system of education for all citizens cannot be delegated. Where LEAs are having difficulty in developing and delivering quality educational opportunities, it is the responsibility of the SEA both to be aware of these difficulties (monitoring), and to provide or arrange for a constructive effort to ameliorate LEA-level difficulties (technical assistance).

The SEA may not be able to provide all of the necessary assistance-oriented resources itself. It is the SEA's responsibility, however, to provide human and material resources to assist LEAs in designing and delivering solutions. Where LEAs cannot or will not act independently, the SEA must adopt a leadership or catalyst role.

Many large city special education programs are having difficulty in responding to the minimum standards of federal and state law, much less to progress beyond compliance to meet the additional test of contemporary professional standards and a yet-to-be-developed set of "quality indicators." While some city school systems and their special education efforts are reasonably self-reliant and can cope without significant SEA support and/or assistance, most cannot.

Premise #4 - SEAs and LEAs Should Re-examine Attitudes and Practices Related to Collaborative Action

Historically, in states where large city, small town, and rural school districts coexist, SEAs have had a difficult time creating technical assistance strategies and regulatory/monitoring procedures which are useful and suitable to both large and small LEA operations. Most technical assistance strategies and regulatory procedures designed for rural areas or smaller districts are generally not suitable for larger, more complex educational agencies. Several of the factors discussed under Premise #1 help to explain why city school systems often have difficulty in responding to data requests, timelines, and procedural imperatives designed primarily for rural areas or for small school districts.

Most states are primarily rural in nature, with hundreds of small districts to but one or two large city LEAs. As a result, SEAs have generally designed and implemented their operations to cater to smaller school district routines and procedures. To compound this, state legislatures have been dominated primarily by rural and small community interests. Recent state legislative reapportionment activity has, in many states, not done enough to redress this imbalance. The legacy of attitude (rural vs. urban) remains and is evidenced in many an important education-related state statutory and/or regulatory proposal.

Another complicating factor is that, at least until recently, SEAs have predominately employed personnel whose interests and experiences are rooted in smaller LEA operations. Such persons have few internal norms for the complexities of large city LEA operations, and subsequently have a difficult time relating to, communicating with, and understanding the perspectives of large city school personnel.

In a number of states, relationships between city school systems and the SEA are characterized by either open confrontation or covert suspicion and/or hostility. While some SEAs have made major efforts to adapt to the needs of large city programs, most have adopted a posture of benign neglect, punctuated by occasional attempts to make city programs conform to the rest of the state in terms of meeting standards and state-defined data needs and timelines.

Conversely, city school programs have generally not been characterized by openness and have in many cases become essentially closed organizations. In many city school systems, personnel practices which discourage legitimate external attempts to assist have given "outsiders" a sometimes real and sometimes distorted perspective of large city school systems, and an undercurrent of negativism exists.

On many occasions, SEA timelines and data requirements are inappropriate for large city special education operations. However, some of the responsibility for lack of timely response to SEA requirements and requests must be attributed to poor data/personnel/planning and management systems internal to the city special education organization.

Thus, the interaction between SEA and large city LEA special education organizations is often unproductive, and, in some cases, is counterproductive. City program leaders and administrators as well as SEA personnel need to adopt a more analytic, flexible, and open approach to their interactions. Each needs to look internally and to the other to ensure a more prospective, productive relationship.

Section II

THE BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS: CASE STUDY OF THE NEED FOR TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE IN A LARGE URBAN SCHOOL SYSTEM

In July of 1972 Chapter 766, Massachusetts' landmark special education legislation, was signed into law to become effective in September of 1974.

Chapter 766 provides essentially the same educational and procedural guarantees to handicapped children and youth as P.L. 94-142 and Section 504 Regulations. The two-year delay between enactment and implementation was intended to provide the State Department of Education with sufficient time to develop and disseminate implementation regulations and provide LEAs with adequate time to plan for the new responsibilities imposed by the Regulations. Although State Regulations were not completed until late Spring of 1974, and local districts had prepared very little for implementation of the law, Chapter 766 became effective on the first day of the 1974-75 school year.

For the Boston Public Schools, this was also the first day of what was to prove to be a very painful, phased, system-wide implementation of a racial desegregation mandate. For years before, the Boston Schools parried with the State Department of Education and the U.S. District Court around the racial identity of its schools. After the Boston Schools lost a United States Supreme Court appeal bid, the U.S. District Court dictated the means and timelines by which the system would become racially desegregated. An involuntary busing program became the primary change vehicle.

In 1976, the Boston Public Schools ranked as the 27th largest city school system in the country. The Superintendent of Schools reported to a five member School Committee. A Board of Superintendents, uniquely vested by Boston tradition as well as State Law with broad advisory and decision-making powers, was comprised of the following members: Deputy Superintendent for Operations, Associate Superintendent for Instruction, Associate Superintendent for Vocational Education, Associate Superintendent for Special Services, Associate Superintendent for Personnel, Associate Superintendent for Special Funding and Programs, Associate Superintendent for Support Services, and Business Manager.

In 1976, under a Federal Court desegregation order, the six administrative districts of the School System had been re-designed into nine administrative districts, - eight geographic "community districts" and one programmatic city-wide "magnet district." (The latter includes the System's specialty or "theme schools" created to hold the City's middle-class families, as well as to attract new families to the public school system.)

Without reconstructing the already well-documented Boston desegregation effort, it can be said that most all other issues became secondary considerations to the implementation of the federal court order. The School System could well be characterized as being under siege. A near-paralyzing tension pervaded the schools and administrative offices. "Survival" became an operational, and, at times, educational slogan. While incidences of racial violence would plague the System for several years to come, the 1974-75 and 1975-76 school years were most disruptive.

By late 1975, the Administrations of the State Department of Education and Boston School Department were intent on refocusing energies to providing quality educational services to Boston's students. One of the primary concerns of both was with the very evident delay in system-wide implementation of Chapter 766.

In February of 1976, the Superintendent of Schools released a report of a study conducted to identify major gaps in Chapter 766 compliance.* The report's findings included the following major areas of program need:

- Insufficient identification, referral, and intervention services for special needs students, particularly of children ages 3-5;
- Inefficient student evaluation procedures and processes;
- Major delays in the student evaluation process;
- Services recommended on Individual Education Plans (IEP) not being provided;
- Inadequate information sharing across the system regarding available programs for special needs students;
- Insufficient inservice training opportunities on the law and its implications; and,
- Limited, if any, interagency collaboration.

These assessments were made despite (1) significant expansion of special needs services in the City Schools since the 1973-74 school year, (2) expansion of parental involvement in all phases of the evaluation and programming process, and (3) the hiring and reallocation of additional personnel to provide special education services.

* Perullo, L.P. *An Assessment of Selected Dimensions of the Delivery System of Special Needs Services*. Boston, Massachusetts: Boston Public Schools, 1976

In May of the same year, a Department of Education Program Audit Report of the Boston Schools compliance with Chapter 766 cited the system as generally in "major non-compliance" with some 18 of the law's/regulations' provisions. In addition, the Audit Report listed more than 50 service delivery problem areas. The report noted that while its findings were derived from an extensive review of programs in only one of the System's administrative districts, the non-compliance and problem areas were of such a nature that generalizations could be made regarding Chapter 766 implementation throughout the System.

Non-compliance and problem areas included:

- Lack of special education/vocational education program options;
- Use of non-certified personnel to teach special needs students;
- Lack of system-adopted and implemented procedures for the screening, identification, referral, evaluation, placement, and progress review of students with special educational needs;
- Lack of ancillary services;
- Lack of sufficient materials, supplies, and instructional space;
- Inappropriate grouping of and inadequate programming for handicapped students of limited English-speaking abilities;
- Insufficient staff development efforts with both regular and special education professionals - teachers and administrators;
- Lack of parent involvement in all areas of program development and program delivery, both at the individual child and system levels;
- Evidence of gross non-compliance and poor quality of Individual Education Plan (IEP) development and implementation;
- An administrative and program structure organized by disability category; and,
- Inadequate student/staff/program data management system to substantiate program census for state reimbursement claims as well as for program planning.

Boston Schools Sued

At the same time that the State's Audit Team report was being released, several parents filed suit against the Boston Public Schools charging non-compliance with Chapter 766. Represented by an attorney from The Massachusetts Advocacy Center, the suit (*Derek Allen, et al. vs John J. McDonough, et al.*; Suffolk Superior Court No. 14948) specifically alleged

- (1) that a number of Boston children referred for special education evaluations were not receiving those evaluations in accordance with the Chapter 766 requirements of a maximum 30 day period between date of referral and date of evaluation; and,
- (2) that Boston children placed in special education programs were not having the efficacy of their programs reviewed annually, as prescribed by Chapter 766 law and Regulations.

On June 25, 1976, the State Superior Court approved a consent decree entered into by the plaintiffs and the defendant Boston School Committee, the School System having admitted liability on the issue of not providing students with evaluations and reviews within the time limit prescribed by law. The consent decree covered only the "preliminary relief" in the case, and stipulated that within 45 days of the date of the decree all backlogged evaluations and reviews would be completed.

The School Department earmarked \$600,000 for a summer effort to locate, evaluate, or review, and, where necessary, identify appropriate placements for the targeted children before the beginning of the school year, some eight weeks away. A "supplemental consent decree" was to be filed with the court by the parties in August specifying "permanent relief" provisions related to how the School System would remain in compliance with provisions of Chapter 766 once the backlog was eliminated.

The State Department of Education joined the *Allen vs. McDonough* suit as plaintiff-intervener on the strength of (1) the Audit Team's findings that the non-compliance issues indicated a lack of system-wide initiatives to implement the law rather than narrowly reflecting problems of but one of nine administrative districts, and (2) the court suit itself which indicated the magnitude of evaluation and annual review non-compliance. This was done so that the State Department might participate in the development of permanent relief agreements regarding how key elements of the State's special education law were to be implemented in the Commonwealth's largest city. Since the court action continued for more than three years, this involvement helped refine the State Department's monitoring, enforcement, and helping role with regard to Boston.

Section III

THE BOSTON PROJECT: PROVISION OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE THROUGH A STATE EDUCATION AGENCY

It was clear that the four-year-old state law was not being implemented in the Boston Public Schools on a system-wide basis. It was clear, also, that the constraints to Chapter 766 compliance in Boston were systemic, requiring major change in the School System's special education organizational structure, procedures, and programs. While employing the State's Superior Court as one strategy to move Boston forward on Chapter 766 implementation, the State Department of Education also recognized its responsibility to provide extra assistance and guidance to establish compliance.

Consequently, the State's Associate Commissioner for Special Education and the Boston Superintendent of Schools agreed that:

1. A special project would be created under the aegis of the State Department's Division of Special Education as a means of providing technical assistance;
2. The Associate Commissioner and Superintendent would concur on the selection of a project director;
3. While the project's immediate attention would be centered on the critical evaluation/annual review backlog, its major focus would be on resolving the systemic problems faced by the System's special education unit; and,
4. The project would serve as a mechanism to facilitate more effective communication between the State Department and Boston Public Schools leadership and, whenever possible, provide a basis for cooperative problem solving.

The Boston Project's Director reported directly to the State's Associate Commissioner. This organizational visibility provided the very necessary perception of "clout" and legitimacy to obtain and to maintain access to Boston and SEA superordinates and subordinates. The reporting lines, coupled with the access to the Superintendent of Schools, allowed for a

unique communication link which proved to be critical as the relationship between the SEA and Boston experienced natural highs and lows — particularly over the SEA's position on issues in the *Allen vs. McDonough* case.

Project staff included an Associate Director, an Administrative Assistant/Secretary and selected outside consultants. Primary clients of the Project's activities were identified as the Superintendent of the Boston Public Schools and the School System's Associate Superintendent for Special Services.

Three major tenets guided the development and execution of the Boston Project:

1. For the law's benefits to be realized most completely at the classroom level, the law had to be managed effectively at a school system's leadership and policy levels;
2. Organizational change is most meaningful when the external technical assistance agent/team does not function and is not seen as **the** change agent; i.e., the change agent(s) must be **internal** if change is to be managed as an ongoing systemic aspect of an organization; and,
3. A major function for the Project technical assistance team is the specific training of the internal change agent(s) in the design and management of specific changes throughout the total system.

The primary goals of the Project were to provide technical assistance to the Boston Schools' leadership in (1) complying with the mandates of Massachusetts Chapter 766 as well as P.L. 94-142 and those provisions of Section 504 dealing with the education of the handicapped, (2) developing and implementing a continuum of special education programs consistent with contemporary definitions of quality, and (3) establishing a plan for the continuing renewal of the Boston special education management and program development systems.

The Technical Assistance Process and Model

Guiding the implementation of the Boston Project was a technical assistance and organizational change process utilizing the "coordinate status" model of consultation which occurs between equals rather than between superordinates and subordinates, or between "specialists" and clients. Section IV provides a more complete description of the process model.

The Director and Project Staff, as technical assistance/support persons, and Boston's Associate Superintendent of Schools, as the internal change agent, functioned as a Renewal Management Team with a mission to define and initiate change within the System.

This team became the day-to-day, on-site core of all organized support. The type and configuration of resources used was contingent upon the needs defined by the team and legitimized by the Superintendent of Schools, on the one hand, and the State's Associate Commissioner, on the other.

The issue of Project evaluation was critical to the establishment and maintenance of Project credibility beyond the primary clients with whom constant interaction would take place. An

evaluation design was developed and implemented by a contracted evaluator employing the Discrepancy Evaluation Model.* The design allowed for (1) an ongoing assessment as to whether or not Project goals and objectives were being achieved, (2) a determination of how Project goals and objectives were being attained, and (3) when, because of situational variables or new client needs, new goals and objectives were required.

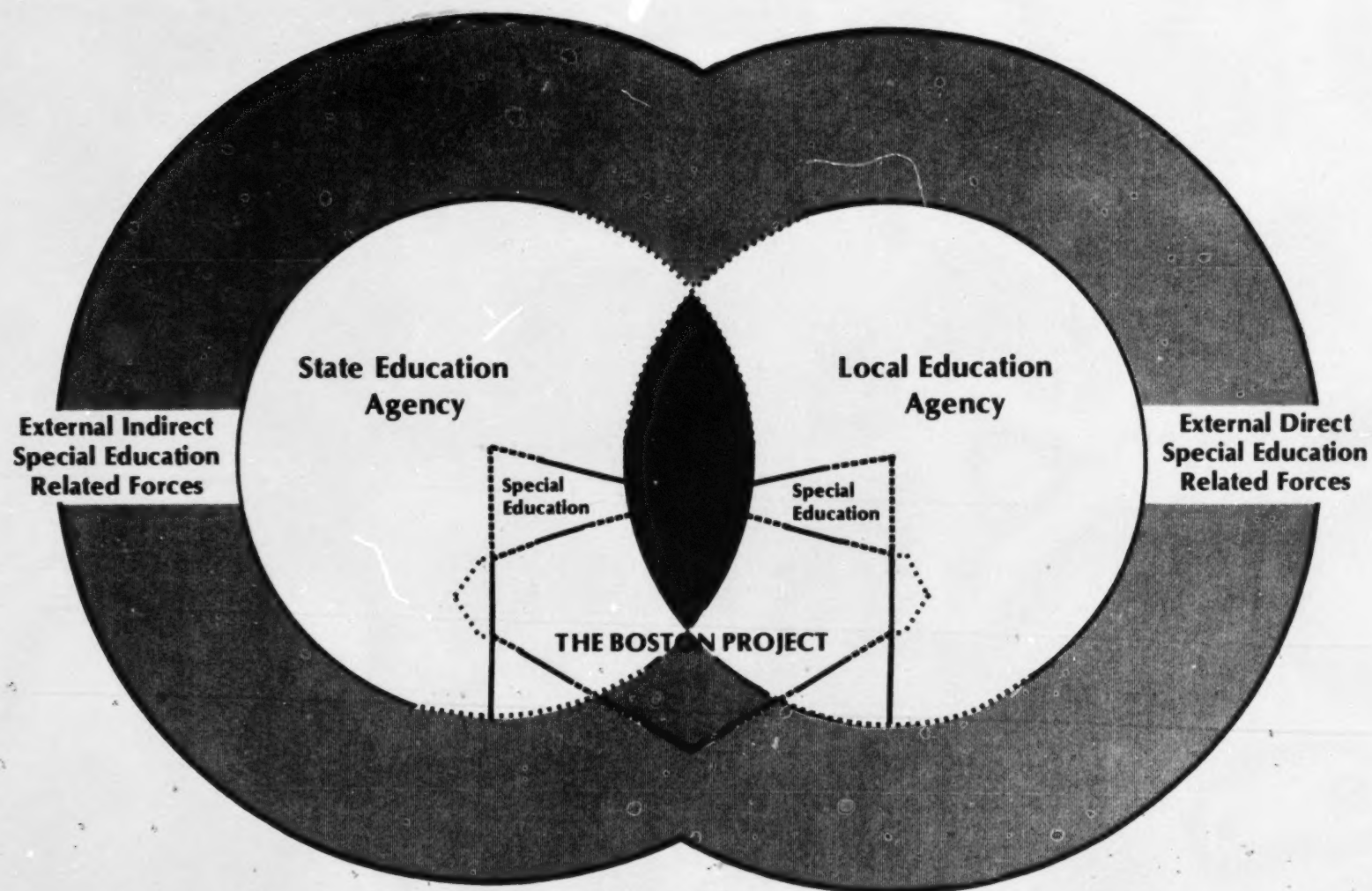
Graphically represented in Figure III-1, the Boston Project Technical Assistance Model overlaps both the SEA and LEA; having internal/external information and influence common to both as well as unique to itself.

Primarily a technical assistance effort to special education leaders and managers, the Project model allows for reaching out into and receiving input from the non-special education units within both agencies, SEA and LEA. Routine interactions between the SEA and LEA occur outside of the Project. While the Project's primary technical assistance target is the LEA's special education unit, the SEA's special education unit is also designated as a target for Project assistance as well as a major resource to its activities.

Dotted lines represent permeable information and influence membranes. Solid lines signify boundaries that are protective of the unique character of each system; i.e., internal norms, forces and functions. The darkened overlap between the two agencies depicts those routine procedures and interactions, some special education related and some not, which generally occur between a state education agency and a local education agency. External Indirect Special Education Forces include such phenomena as state/federal budget cutting, smaller families, shifting societal goals, and expansion of basic scientific/medical knowledge. External Direct Special Education Related Forces include such phenomena as the Federal P.L. 94-142 and Section 504, advocacy groups, university/college special education training programs, and other state and local human service agencies.

* Provus, Malcolm. *Discrepancy Evaluation*. Berkeley, California: McCutcheon, 1971

FIGURE III-1

BOSTON PROJECT TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE MODEL

Boston's Master Plan

While day-to-day consultation and assistance were to be provided, the major focus of Project staff was to supply Boston's Department of Special Services leadership with a short and long-range planning concentration. This was to be accomplished primarily through the development and implementation of a Master Plan to implement specific administrative and programmatic change objectives and activities which would lead to total organizational renewal. Spanning a period of April 1, 1977, to June 30, 1982, the Master Plan was to provide a clear, systematic transition from the System's past special education service delivery model to a new model which would (1) bring the System into compliance with state and federal regulations, (2) allow the System to maintain compliance with state and federal regulations, and (3) ensure a standard of quality consistent with contemporary definitions of best practice.

The primary goals of the Master Plan and its organization reflected what was to become the central focus of Department of Special Services activity:

1. To establish compliance with Chapter 766 by June 30, 1977;
2. To maintain compliance with all aspects of Chapter 766 from the date of compliance forward;
3. To employ the best standards of professional judgment for meeting the special needs of Boston's students;
4. To employ the doctrine of the least restrictive alternative in the delivery of special services to Boston's students;
5. To provide a continuum of services that would most appropriately meet the established needs of Boston's students; and,
6. To design, implement, and measure the service delivery system which met the above goals in the most effective, efficient, and cost-responsible way.

The Boston Master Plan is comprised of four components:

- A. Elimination of gross non-compliance areas, and the establishment of a decision system for student evaluations and determination of most appropriate individualized program of services;
- B. Compliance maintenance through the definition of a management system to improve the school system's ability to implement Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) consistent with state and federal requirements;
- C. Design/redesign of a continuum of program and support services to maximize the school system's ability to implement IEPs and upgrade the delivery of special services, and an implementation plan for that continuum; and,
- D. Design of an ongoing organizational renewal plan for the management of the special education unit.

The implementation of Component A, submitted to and approved by the Boston School Committee in early April, 1977, facilitated the virtual elimination of a backlog of a more than 2,500 student evaluations and program reviews. Component B, submitted to the School Committee in September of 1977 and approved in November of the same year, presented recommendations for (1) the reorganization and decategorization of the Department of Special Services administrative/programmatic structure, and (2) the development of a Departmental data management system.

The intent of Component C was to describe those efforts which the Department's leadership would pursue over a one-to-three year period to design and implement a full continuum of services as required by Chapter 766, P.L. 94-142, and Section 504. Guiding Component C development was a draft statement of philosophy adopted by Department leadership in the Summer of 1978.

In the aggregate, Master Plan Component C is comprised of 19 individual Program Development Plans for each Department program, and Coordination, Supervision, and Training Plans for each Department Director and Associate Director. The process involved in the development of Component C was comprehensive and multi-faceted. Over a span of ten months, Department professionals examined and analyzed the range and quality of Boston's special education offerings, and compared this "status" with a researched and self-defined ideal. Through several training institutes and with consultant support provided by the Boston Project, this discrepancy analysis resulted in the specification of intermediate change goals and objectives designed to close the gaps between current and ideal programming.

Component D presents the Department with a plan for the establishment of an ongoing program of self-renewal and planning. The need for this component evolved out of an understanding that (1) a prime motivation for planning and renewal with the Department - The Boston Project - was a temporary phenomenon, and (2) without such a specific renewal cycle being defined, the Department might well retrench and, in time, be challenged with the very same compliance and program quality issues it faced in 1976.

Component D identifies three Renewal Target Arenas and recommends renewal cycles at which time the sufficiency and appropriateness of organizational performance with regard to the particular arena would be assessed and, where necessary, modified. Primary and secondary responsibility lines as well as critical sources/documents are also noted. The three Renewal Target Arenas, their elements and suggested renewal cycles are presented in the Appendix.

Boston Project Technical Assistance Activities

The technical assistance activities of the Boston Project complemented the conduct of the major compliance attainment, organizational design, program development, and renewal focus of the Master Plan. Technical assistance requests were addressed to the Project Director who decided on the appropriateness of the request, judging by such criteria as:

- Is the request consistent with the objectives of the Project?
- Has the request been made by an established client of the Project?
- Can the Project, with its present resources, actually handle the request, or effect any change in this situation?

For Project-initiated activities, the Project Director employed the human and material resources of the Project in a myriad of ways so as to establish and maintain an image of the Project as being both responsive to the needs of the clients and an effective force for change.

Under the rubric of technical assistance, the Project staff helped the Boston Schools write its Local Education Agency Plan and applications for Federal discretionary grants; participated as a resource to the Department of Education in the revision of Chapter 766 Regulations; designed and conducted an evaluation of Boston's Health Services and Speech and Language Programs; and, worked with a local parent advocacy organization in its efforts to gain greater access to information from the Special Services Department.

The following listing provides an additional view of the range of Project technical assistance activities and reflects the Project's priorities of compliance attainment and quality program development:

- Conducted a system-wide needs assessment related to such areas as personnel development, staffing levels, public communication, transportation, evaluation and placement;
- Developed a Boston-specific set of procedures for the identification, referral, evaluation, placement, and program review of students with special needs;
- Developed a process whereby the Department of Special Services could take full advantage of state and federal financial support for program development efforts;
- Sponsored inservice training sessions for central, district, and building-level special education personnel and coordinators;
- Provided impetus, support, and direction to the establishment of a Department of Special Services management information system;
- Conducted a study of national practices in the psychological and educational assessment of non-English speaking children;
- Provided leadership and direction to the development of a Bilingual Special Education program policy statement and program development plan;
- Assisted in the establishment of a coordinated approach to providing vocational education opportunities to the handicapped, and participated in the subsequent development of a continuum of occupational/special education programs;
- Provided support and assistance to the development of a plan to study and remedy, where necessary, the over/under representation of minorities in special education programs;
- Sponsored periodic inservice training meetings for city administrators of special education programs from throughout the Commonwealth of Massachusetts;
- Conducted, for two successive years, a special research effort to evaluate IEPs. Findings were used to provide feedback to school personnel and to lend direction to the system's inservice training programs; and
- Conducted an analysis of the structure and functioning of the clerical workforce of the Department and made suggestions and recommendations related to the renewal of these services.

Benefit Analysis

The purpose of the Boston Project was to provide technical assistance to the Boston Public Schools' leadership in complying with state and federal special education mandates and in developing quality special education programs. Sponsored by the State Department of Education at a time when Boston was in substantial non-compliance, the Project's resources were immediately channeled to the resolution of the most obvious areas of non-compliance; e.g., the Master Plan Component A regarding overdue evaluations and annual reviews. As plans were designed and implemented to address those issues, the Project reviewed the critical organizational and programmatic characteristics of Boston's service delivery system which, in fact, had given rise to and sustained the non-compliance status, and adopted a master planning strategy to change the System's total performance level.

The impact of this unique renewal effort on the organization and delivery of special education services in the Boston Public Schools is outlined in Table III-2. The identified changes indicate the significant progress made by the Boston Public Schools between 1976 and 1979 in establishing compliance with Chapter 766, P.L. 94-142 and the education requirements of Section 504, and in developing improved programs for special needs students. This progress occurred at a time of increased external and internal pressure, and during a period which saw no lessening in the complexity of day-to-day management and administrative requirements.

In summary, the following benefits have been derived from the Boston Project effort:

- A. Students in need of special education services are identified and provided services in a more efficient, effective manner consistent with the mandate of state law, P.L. 94-142, and Section 504, and the dictates of best professional practice;
- B. The SEA/large city LEA relationship has become more balanced - each conducting its respective duties (SEA monitoring; LEA implementation) with greater understanding of how one impacts upon the other;
- C. The SEA has achieved a greater operational understanding as to how it can most effectively assist and monitor state law and P.L. 94-142 compliance progress in its largest LEA; and,
- D. The LEA's ability to achieve state law and P.L. 94-142 compliance in a deliberate, effective, and efficient manner has been enhanced.

This listing of accomplishments is not intended to imply that the Boston Public School System has, in fact, "arrived." Significant organizational and programmatic hurdles have yet to be confronted and resolved before complete compliance with state and federal laws is achieved and quality in programming is ensured.

Continuing problems include a need for: greater efficiency in providing specific educational programs and related services (e.g., day and residential programs, physical therapy, counseling, transportation); a more complete range of programs for 16-21 year old students with special education needs; increased quality in the Bilingual/Special Education arena; advanced degree of parental involvement at all levels of the service delivery system; provision of required three-year re-evaluations; and a more comprehensive inservice training and re-training program for school system personnel.

As discussed earlier, change is a constant reality in large urban school systems and, since the Summer of 1978, many changes have occurred which will impact upon the Boston School System's ability to respond to these challenges. A new Superintendent of Schools has reorganized the School System's administrative structure. A focus on decentralizing administrative functions has (1) brought about a diminished organizational role for the System's chief special education executive and (2) resulted in there being no central point of coordination for all special education and related services. Such actions promise to negatively influence the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery. At the State Department of Education, change also has occurred in the leadership of the Special Education Division. Such changes heighten the need for continued and possibly increased collaboration between these agencies.

The pace and substance of change achieved by the Boston Schools during the Boston Project experience gives testimony to the strength of such collaboration. Capacity to resolve the continuing and new issues exists not in one agency alone but in both.

**BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
DEPARTMENT OF SPECIAL SERVICES
1976 - 1979 COMPARISON**

TABLE III-2

ISSUE	ORGANIZATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS 1976	ORGANIZATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS 1979	ISSUE	ORGANIZATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS 1976	ORGANIZATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS 1979
A. Special Needs Students Served	• 6300	• 10,500	G. Program Access & Quality Control	• Limited • Uncoordinated	• See reference to Procedures Manual and program continuum development in D. above • Established centrally coordinated process for technical and quality review of education plans and assessments of students being recommended for more restrictive program placements • Designed and initiated a comprehensive plan to ensure the appropriateness of placement for minority students in several programs where minority over-representation was found to exist
B. Chapter 766 / P. L. 94-142 Compliance	• Substantial Non-Compliance	• Substantial Compliance within reach	H. Parental Involvement	• Limited to Evaluation meeting and, on individual basis, to education plan implementation	• Parents represented in selection process for all Department leadership personnel • Parent groups collaborated in the design, writing, and dissemination of a <i>Department of Special Services Directory</i>
C. Organizational Structure	• Categorical by Disability • Duplicative	• Categorical by Function • Evolving Efficiency/Effectiveness	I. Inservice Training	• Limited • Uncoordinated	• Plans established and implemented for By-Program Unit inservice training of special education personnel • Conducted several intensive inservice training sessions for Department administration and program leadership in organizational planning techniques • First Comprehensive Inservice Training Plan developed and implemented
D. System-wide Procedures	• None	• Developed and implemented Special Education Procedures Manual to ensure appropriate referrals, thorough and professional assessments, articulate and specific education plans, and timely and precise reviews for each student determined to be in need of special services • Developed and initiated, by Departmental Program Unit, a comprehensive continuum of program and support services, and statement of implementation strategies	J. External Funding (non-entitlement)	• None	• State grants \$395,000 • Federal grants \$130,000
E. Compensatory Services	• None	• Implemented a Compensatory Services Program to match the objectives in students' education plans with additional services necessitated by the School System's inability to implement those education plans in a timely and complete fashion			
F. Bilingual Special Education Program Development	• Uncoordinated	• Created position of Bilingual Special Education Program Specialist to oversee program development and implementation • Established administrative policy regarding the integration of English-speaking, Bilingual, and limited English-speaking students in special education programs • Developed guidelines for Bilingual Special Education Programs maximally ensuring against inappropriate referral and placement			

Section IV

BOSTON PROJECT REPLICATION: TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROCESS MODEL REQUIREMENTS

The adopted model for guidance of the overall Boston Project Technical Assistance Model was developed by Johnson.* Implementation of the model requires attention to eight major operational time-specific phases and five generic activities encompassing a minimum of three years of renewal activity. The process model is graphically represented in Figure IV-1.

The eight time-specific phases are:

1. Preliminary Negotiations
2. Needs Assessment
3. Goal Setting
4. Model Building
5. Task, Strategy, Accountability Specification
6. Implementation
7. Outcome Evaluation
8. Recycle/Reprogram

The generic activities are:

1. Legitimation
2. Process Evaluation
3. Decision-Recording
4. Task and Strategy Reprogramming
5. Change Agent Training.

*Johnson, R.A. *Improving effectiveness of a school organization through coordinate status consultation*. In Parker, C.A. (Ed.) **Psychological Consultation: Helping teachers meet special needs**. Minneapolis, Minnesota: Leadership Training Institute/Special Education, University of Minnesota, 1975.

This section will discuss each of these phases and activities in terms of principal recommended actions required to implement each phase within that part of a total school district organization which is responsible for special education and related services. Except where variables are clearly definable as an absolute requirement which applies uniformly to all renewal sites, variables such as specific timetable, activity costs, and activity responsibility assignments will not be specified. Typically, activities related to these variables are idiosyncratic to the renewal site and must be defined on-site.

Prior to a discussion of each time-specific phase, however, two general considerations are important. These are (1) the need to attend to the five generic activities of the model while conducting each time-specific phase, and (2) the fact that amount of time required to complete each time-specific phase is not a standard or set time; e.g., two months for Phase I, Preliminary Negotiations. The overall and phase-by-phase timetable is open for definition at each renewal site. While the Implementation Phase is typically the longest-term time-specific phase, others may also extend over significant periods of time. The point is that there are no ground rules for the length of time each time-specific phase must or should take. The primary requirement is that the essential steps in the process for each phase be conducted thoroughly and consistently.

The five generic activities are essential activity clusters within each time-specific phase. Three of them (Process Evaluation, Decision-Recording, and Reprogramming) are discussed within Table IV-2, Phase VI. The other two, Change Agent Training and Legitimation, are basically activities designed to provide both formal or informal inservice in change agency and organizational development for agency representatives and specified significant others; and, for Legitimation, to seek both indirect and direct approval/authorization/external consensus for renewal decisions and activities at every major step in the process. Inattention to generic activities will cause problems in the event of personnel turnover, and will result in unintended organizational drift. These problems do not have to occur, but in this model one must attend to all generic activities of the technical assistance process if they are to be prevented.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROCESS MODEL

Phase I. Preliminary Negotiations. This is the phase where all major participants of the Renewal Management Team (described in the next section) develop some common understandings and premises about the renewal effort, the technical assistance process, sponsorship, and policy. Basic issues central to this phase relate to: Who are we? Why are we here? How do we relate to each other? What operational priority matters must we attend to? What process or approach are we going to engage in? Over what estimated period of time? With what resources obtained from where and how? With which basic philosophical understandings and tenets? What are some problems that need be addressed as "problem statements?" What basic needs assessment data do we need to proceed and how do we get it? Where and how do we need to legitimate our understandings and Phase I decisions?

Phase II. Needs Assessment. The Renewal Management Team will have determined in Phase I what data base will have been required to support the "problem statements" and to write specific, meaningful renewal goals. The purposes of Phase II are the collection of needs assessment data and the development of an analysis plan for each problem statement. The analysis is to clarify/refine and assign priorities to the original Phase I problem statements.

Phase III. Goal Setting. In this phase, the refined problem statements are translated into formal Goal Statements, with measurable objectives being developed for each goal. Generally, all problem statements and subsequent goals fall into one of several categories: (1) high priority, crisis problems which require immediate attention and intensive effort; (2) more long-term effort focused on renewal of the leadership and management structure and systems; (3) more long-term effort focused on renewal of the instructional delivery system; and (4) development of an ongoing internal renewal system designed to upgrade the organization on a continuing basis. Typically, more than one goal is written in each of these four areas either to "renew" a portion of the organization and/or eliminate the problem areas.

Phase IV. Model Building. This phase begins the development of a formal "Master Plan," a document which guides the details of the renewal process, and which specifically includes renewal goals (developed in Phase III) and approaches related to each goal. Specific steps, activities and strategies for implementing each approach are also defined. For example, a renewal goal calling for redefinition of the Management and Supervisory structure would, during this phase, be translated into a new approach or model for utilizing Management and Supervisory personnel. The purpose of the next phase (V) is to add definition to the approach and Phase VI (Implementation) is to install the approach. Models for organizational renewal of a leadership structure, or for any other goal area, may already exist in a form sufficient for adoption as the "ideal" desired for any given renewal site. In many instances, however, the Renewal Management Team must create an approach or a model to meet the specific local need.

Whether adopted or created, the approaches accepted for use are only "best guesses," and can be revised at regular intervals (Process Evaluation) or as an outcome of Phase VII, Outcome Evaluation.

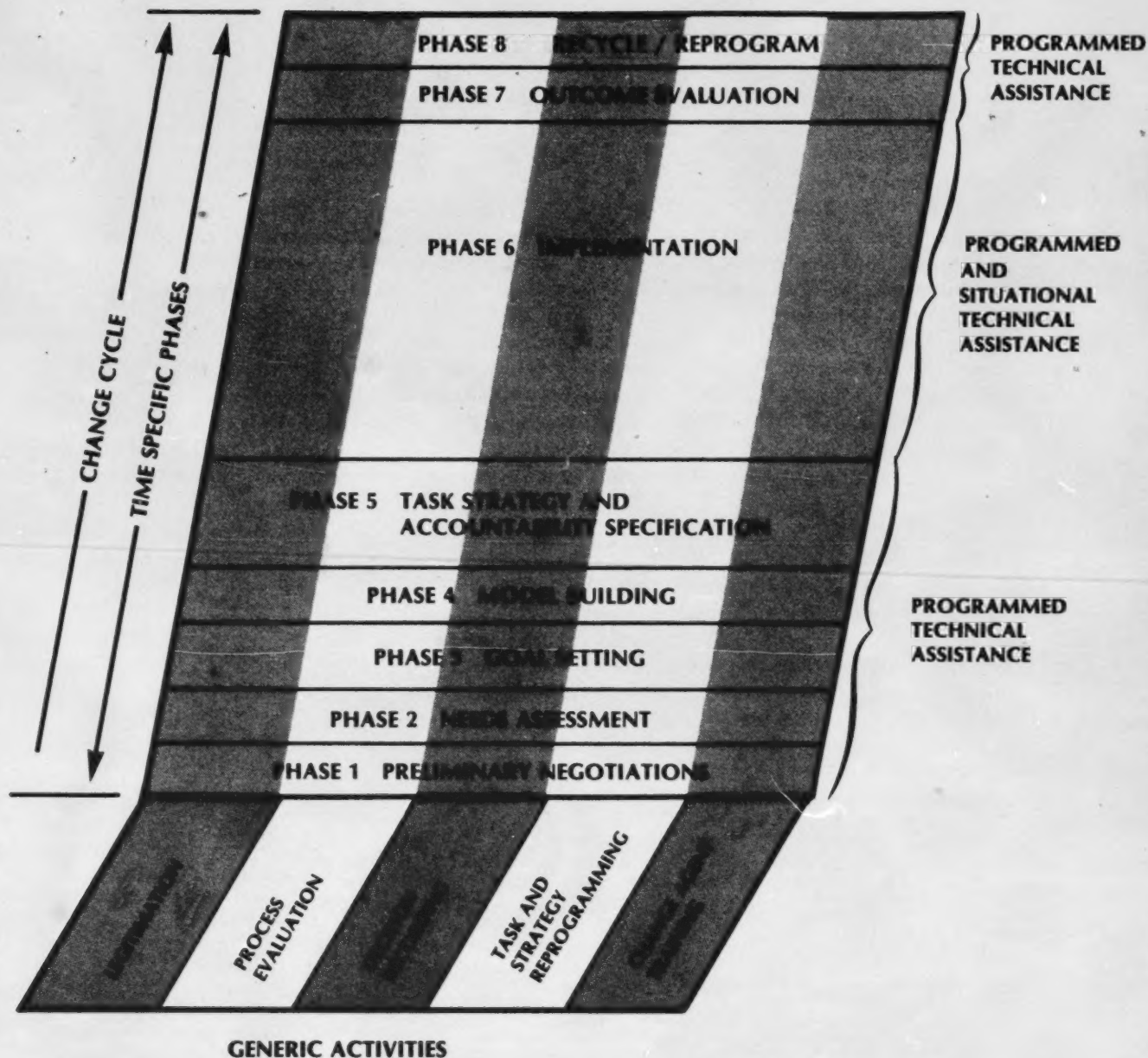
Phase V. Task, Strategy, Accountability Specification. Each approach developed in Phase IV must be analyzed in terms of the essential activities and timelines required for goal attainment, and accountability for task performance is assigned to specific persons. In essence, this phase will specify what has to be done, how it will be done, who is to be responsible, what arrangement of tasks over time is most suitable, what is the overall Implementation Phase timeline, and when will Phase VII, Outcome Evaluation, be conducted?

Phase VI. Implementation Phase. This is the phase where the definitions supplied by the output of Phases III, IV, and V are actually translated into practice. See Table IV-2 for further description of this phase.

Phase VII. Outcome Evaluation. In this phase a goal attainment analysis is accomplished. That is, for each goal the questions are asked: "Where are we? To what degree have we accomplished the goal(s) and, if not fully accomplished, why?" Also, this analysis of outcome-to-date should address the wisdom of continuing, dropping, or modifying unattained goals.

If and/or when all renewal goals are attained or dropped, the process terminates or another renewal cycle is begun. Lack of goal attainment should not be perceived as a failure, but rather as an opportunity for redefinition and revision.

FIGURE IV-1
TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROCESS MODEL



REFERENCE:

Johnson, R. A. *Improving effectiveness of a school organization through coordinate status consultation.* In Parker, C. A. (Ed.) **Psychological Consultation: Helping Teachers Meet Special Needs.** Minneapolis, Minnesota: Leadership Training Institute / Special Education, University of Minnesota, 1975.

Phase VIII. Recycle/Reprogram. This phase results in a determination, for those goals not completed or attained, of the time-specific phase to which activity for that goal will begin again. For example, if more time is required, and if the reason for not attaining the goal was an incorrect "best guess" regarding timelines, then the Implementation Phase continues with a new timeline expectation. On the other hand, if something went awry during the process, or if unpredicted events impede the activity, the goal should be recycled to another, earlier, phase where, as in Phase V, tactical approaches and considerations can be respecified. If the goal needs to be modified, then the recycle loop would go back to Goal Setting or even the Needs Assessment Phase. If the goal seems appropriate then the recycle loop would go back to either the Model Building Phase or to the Task, Strategy, Accountability Specification Phase depending on the reasons for lack of goal attainment.

Table IV-2 provides a phase-by-phase explication of the technical assistance process model by reviewing those major steps in which one might engage in order to replicate the Boston Project in another site.

TABLE IV-2

PHASE-BY-PHASE EXPLICATION OF THE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROCESS MODEL FOR BOSTON PROJECT REPLICATION

PHASE I PRELIMINARY NEGOTIATIONS		
A. Entering the System	B. Contract Primary Site Consultants	C. Contract Site Director
• Replication consultant and agency representatives review requisites of Boston Project model • Determine formal agency representation and renewal team membership • Formulate problem statement(s) • Discuss and develop budget and management considerations • Develop funding projects or proposals as required • Establish task assignments and timeline for completion of Phase I • Establish Phase I accountability grid • Develop housing and formal sponsorship agreement • Establish initial basic tenets • Attend to generic activities	• Determine primary consultant needs beyond those required by the model • Develop list of possible candidates • Assign responsibility for contracting • Estimate number of consultant days per consultant • Contact and contract consultants • Provide orientation for consultants • Attend to generic activities	• Develop agreement on type and qualifications of site director • Write position description • Conduct search • Establish primary contact person and screening process • Screen, interview, select and contract • Develop contingency plans if no one satisfactory or available • Replication consultant, agency representatives, primary site consultants, and site director hold organizational and planning meeting regarding Phase II • Attend to generic activities

TABLE IV-2 (CONTINUED)

PHASE II NEEDS ASSESSMENT		
A. Determine Data Needs	B. Collect and Analyze Data	
● Review problem statements and revise as necessary ● Analyze problem statements for additional information requirements ● Transform information requirements into data elements ● Develop data collection format, instrumentation, timetable, and accountability ● Develop budget and resource needs statement for conduct of needs assessment ● Obtain funding approvals as necessary ● Obtain authorization to conduct research and data collection activities ● Attend to generic activities	● Conduct activities specified in data collection plan ● Assemble, organize, and display data ● Conduct preliminary analysis ● Expand/modify needs assessment timeline, targets and data elements as necessary ● Conduct final analysis of all data ● Reformulate original problem statement(s) as necessary ● Reformulate tenets as necessary ● Attend to generic activities	
PHASE III GOAL SETTING		
A. Priority Short Term	B. Long Term	C. Evaluation Design
● Conduct renewal team goal setting exercise based on reformulated problem statement ● Select problem statements which represent critical "immediate attention" issues ● Translate critical area problem statements into goal statements ● Develop specific objectives for attainment of each goal ● Attend to generic activities	● Translate non-crisis related problem statements into goal statements ● Develop specific objectives for attainment of each goal ● Attend to generic activities	● Develop attainment indicators for each goal ● Develop attainment indicators for each objective ● Develop measurement system for attainment indicators ● Attend to generic activities

TABLE IV-2 (CONTINUED)

PHASE IV MODEL BUILDING			
MASTER PLAN DEVELOPMENT			
A. Model Building for High Priority Problems	B. Model Building for Leadership System Renewal	C. Model Building for Instructional System Renewal	D. Model Building for Ongoing Renewal System
• Review each critical issue • Determine if a model(s) for achieving each goal has been developed elsewhere, and, if so, if that model is appropriate for use in this renewal site • If not useful, or if no formal models or approaches are available in this application, design a model or an approach based on the renewal team's best guess as to what would be a relevant, comprehensive and useful model or approach in this renewal site • Field test or pilot the model or approach if time is available • Revise the model or approach based on field test/pilot outcomes • Attend to generic activities	• Review each leadership system renewal-related goal and related objectives • Determine if a model(s) for achieving each goal has been developed elsewhere, and, if so, if that model is appropriate for use in this renewal site • If not useful, or if no formal models or approaches are available in this application, design a model or an approach based on the renewal team's best guess as to what would be a relevant, comprehensive and useful model or approach in this renewal site • Field test or pilot the model or approach if time is available • Revise the model or approach based on field test/pilot outcomes • Attend to generic activities	• Review each instructional system renewal-related goal and related objectives • Determine if a model(s) for achieving each goal has been developed elsewhere, and, if so, if that is appropriate for use in this renewal site • If not useful, or if no formal models or approaches are available in this application, design a model or an approach based on the renewal team's best guess as to what would be a relevant, comprehensive and useful approach to this renewal site • Field test or pilot the model or approach if time is available • Revise the model or approach based on field test/pilot outcomes • Attend to generic activities	• Review each ongoing renewal system goal and related objectives • Review models/approaches and Phase V Master Plan Development specifications • Develop renewal "targets" list • Develop renewal activities cycle and related timetable specifications • Develop ongoing renewal system instrumentation • Package renewal system for training and dissemination purposes • Attend to generic activities

TABLE IV-2 (CONTINUED)

PHASE V TASK, STRATEGY, ACCOUNTABILITY SPECIFICATION				
MASTER PLAN DEVELOPMENT				
A. Implementation Strategies and Assignments (High Priority Problems)	B. Implementation Strategies and Assignments (Leadership System Renewal)	C. Implementation Strategies and Assignments (Instructional System Renewal)	D. Implementation Strategies and Assignments (Ongoing Renewal System)	E. Develop Technical Assistance Agreements for A-D
• Conduct task analysis of each goal-related model/approach • Detail strategies/steps required to implement each model/approach • Determine timetable specifications for each strategy/step and develop total timetable configuration for each model/approach • Assign task responsibility • Develop monitoring system • Establish tentative Phase VII (Outcome Evaluation) target date • Attend to generic activities	SAME STEPS AS IN COLUMN A.	SAME STEPS AS IN COLUMN A.	SAME STEPS AS IN COLUMN A.	• Analyze each of A-D for technical assistance and other non-local support resources • Identify those technical assistance and support needs which could be met by the renewal project staff and consultants • Identify other technical assistance needs • Develop written technical assistance agreements with renewal project and other resources as required

TABLE IV-2 (CONTINUED)

PHASE VI IMPLEMENTATION ACTIVITIES			
A. High Priority Problem Plans	B. Leadership System Renewal Plans	C. Delivery System Renewal Plans	D. Renewal System Plans
During this time-specific phase, Renewal Management Team functioning and other activities are site-specific. That is, this is the portion of the renewal process where the specific renewal goals and related approaches, strategies, and tasks generated by Phases III, IV, and V are accomplished. In the conduct of this phase, the three generic activities which require constant Renewal Team effort are Process Evaluation, Reprogramming, and Decision Recording. As time passes during the Implementation Phase, "best guesses" made during conduct of the Goal Setting, Model Building, and Task Specification process often need to be modified. Process Evaluation is the technique whereby a review of current status and of the adequacy of original "best guesses" is made on a regularly scheduled, frequent basis during		the Implementation Phase. Reprogramming is action taken to alter or modify the existing output of Phases III, IV and V, and to modify the implementation process. Decision Recording is the formal "track record" of the Process Evaluation and Reprogramming Phases, and of other Implementation Phase activities. This phase is generally not begun and ended for all renewal goals and related activities at the same time. One of the first Implementation Phase activities to begin is that related to High Priority Problem Plans (A), and one of the last to begin and end is that related to Renewal System Plans (D). That is, each Master Plan goal has its own time-specific Implementation Phase, and the beginning of each is triggered by the completion of the time-specific Phase V process.	

TABLE IV-2 (CONTINUED)

PHASE VII OUTCOME EVALUATION	
A. Goal Attainment	B. Other Outcomes
• Determine the degree to which each Master Plan goal has been attained as of the date prescribed by Phase V specifications • For those goals and related objectives which are not completely attained, conduct an analysis of the tasks which (a) cannot be completed at all because of intervening variables/circumstances, (b) can be completed but with some difficulty, and (c) can be completed with ease given a reasonable time extension • Make a determination regarding which unattained goal(s), if any, should be dropped, and which should be recycled/reprogrammed • Attend to generic activities	• Determine if specific goal and objective related activities resulted in any unintended supportive, desirable outcomes • Document these outcomes • Attend to generic activities
PHASE VIII RECYCLE/REPROGRAM	
A. Existing Goals	B. Develop New or Revised Goals as Necessary
• For goals recommended for continuation and reprogramming, determine which time-specific phase would be most appropriate as a recycle point • Recycle to that time-specific phase, and re-institute the process prescribed for that phase • Attend to generic activities	• Review goals and related objectives in the "can't be completed" category and determine if those goals should be restated • Restate goals as appropriate, and write new objectives for each restated goal • Develop new goals where new "problems" or directions are data-based. Where a new problem or renewal direction requires additional definition vis-a-vis data, recycle to Phase II, Needs Assessment • Attend to generic activities

Section V

BOSTON PROJECT REPLICATION: OPERATIONAL REQUIREMENTS AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE CONSIDERATIONS

Primary Model Requirements

Seven primary requirements for replication of a Boston Project Technical Assistance Model are presented below.

An expression of need on the part of key special education executives for either partial or total organizational renewal. In many cases, this expressed need will be motivated by a combination of years of program growth without benefit of an overall long-range plan, by a constant crisis-orientation to management of the organization, and, among others, a need to achieve "compliance" with state and federal mandate.

However, the expressed need does not have to relate to any of these antecedents, but can be motivated by a desire for program analysis and improvement not stimulated by lack of compliance or by any other crisis. The important requirement is that a felt need for organizational renewal is expressed, because any model change is much less successful if imposed by superordinate power without an expression of felt need on the part of executives within the special education organization.

Involvement of the State Education Agency. A state department of education/city school system agreement for the sponsoring, planning, and conducting of an overall renewal effort should be formally arranged. Any LEA special education effort represents the perceptions of both internal LEA operational and governance personnel, and the need of the SEA to ensure compliance with State and Federal mandates. Both responsibilities are very real: LEA personnel are responsible for the creative, constant, and energetic application and interpretation of contemporary professional standards in terms of local requirements; and, SEA personnel are responsible for developing and implementing fair, flexible monitoring, enforcement, and technical assistance systems which will ensure compliance without inhibiting quality program development.

This is not to say that LEA renewal cannot take place without SEA involvement. Important change can occur through other means, including replacement of key personnel and a refocusing of district priorities. Experience has shown, however, that these changes may be poorly understood and/or supported by the SEA, and a major opportunity will have been lost to establish a better working relationship between agencies which can no longer afford to avoid/neglect/obstruct each other.

Since the major focus of the Boston Project model is on helping to create program change and organizational renewal that is substantive, long-lasting, and self-renewing, the model cannot be applied effectively where an SEA-LEA partnership approach is not part and parcel of the renewal effort.

Employment of a Renewal Director or Senior Renewal Consultant. In the application of the Boston Project model to the Boston Public School program, a Director of the Project was employed on a full-time basis to act as a neutral "go-between" (between SEA and LEA), and to manage application of the conceptual change model and the related technical assistance resources. This type of position is seen to be vital to success of the overall renewal effort. A primary reason for employment of an external-to-either-agency professional is to help ensure neutrality and objectivity. Such action also limits the possibility that hard or difficult or agonizing paths or alternatives will be avoided to minimize stress and/or conflict within either organization. While there may be exceptions, most large-scale renewal efforts will probably require a full-time person.

The Renewal Director must have training in special education, and have special education administrative experience at the LEA level, preferably in an urban school system. Desirable also would be experience in an SEA special education unit as a consultant or administrator. In addition to these specifications, the Project Director should be knowledgeable about and experienced in the design and delivery of technical assistance systems, and, in particular, be familiar with the conceptual and operational parameters of the Boston Project model in some detail.

Based on the experience of the Boston Project, the SEA, as the responsible superordinate agency, should directly or indirectly employ the Renewal Director.

A "Standing" Consultant Team. Several permanent specialty consultants are required to implement the Boston Project technical assistance and renewal model. Experience suggests that minimum of two or three in addition to the Renewal Director are required: one, a specialist in the organization, management, and operation of contemporary special education programs, and the second a specialist in training and system evaluation. One of the consultants should also be competent in the area of group and/or team process. If not, an additional consultant with skills in this area of expertise is highly desirable.

The term "permanent" or "standing" consultant does not imply a full-time, on-site person. Rather, the intent is that these consultants would be selected by the Renewal Director as persons who were not only competent, but who would make a commitment to participating on an ongoing basis for the life of the formal renewal effort (potentially three years or more).

These two or three standing consultants would serve as members of and expert advisors to the Renewal Management Team, would attend all meetings of this team, and would be available for technical assistance assignments as made by the Team.

A Renewal Management Team. A complex and extensive organizational renewal effort requires a great deal of organized, consistent management and guidance control. It has been the experience of the Boston Project that no one or two persons can effectively manage and guide an extensive renewal effort, and that a defined, standing (for the life of the renewal effort) Renewal Management Team effort is required. Based on the experience of the Boston Project, the core members of the team should be the Project Director, SEA Representative, LEA Representative, and Standing Consultants (2-3).

This team of five to six persons should meet about every four to six weeks during the first year and at least three to four times each year thereafter.

The purpose of this team is to develop renewal policy, to evaluate the progress of the renewal effort, and to assist with the coordination of all technical assistance activities.

Ad Hoc Consultant/Technical Assistance Pool. An essential element of this technical assistance approach is the availability of resources to employ special ad hoc management, training, program, and other consultants on an as-needed basis during the renewal planning and implementation. While the need for flexible use of consultants exists during the total renewal process, a major need will exist during the service delivery or program renewal effort. Determination of needs and selection of specific consultants and/or resources to meet these needs is the responsibility of the Renewal Management Team.

While this type of flexible resource must be available, the scope and amount of dollar resources required is a local determination, contingent on the scope of the renewal effort and the size of the school system.

Minimum Dollar Resource Needs. While the size of the budget required for conduct of the Boston Project model is somewhat contingent on the size of the renewal site and on the scope, sequence, and timetable of the renewal effort, experience of the Boston Project over three years indicates that the first year budget for any renewal site would be a minimum of \$100,000. Subsequent renewal years may be more or less than this minimum.

Technical Assistance Considerations

In addition to the previously stated primary model requirements to Boston Project replication, several considerations are presented below which are important variables in the initiation and implementation of an effort directed at total organizational renewal within a large city LEA's special education unit.

Organizational Tension. Renewal connotes growth and change. Thus, by definition, a technical assistance project focused on organizational renewal facilitates change and generates those tensions within the client system which are natural to any organization undergoing change. In the instance of the Boston Project Model, these tensions will be found to exist in both the SEA and LEA systems, as change in one demands a reciprocal change in the other. The role/function uncertainties and ambiguities caused by even the most temporary of shifts in organizational equilibrium adds additional fuel to intra and inter organizational tension. Such tension, while a fact of life to technical assistance providers, is not generally understood by either system. For this reason, preliminary negotiations must include discussion of the to-be-expected organizational tensions and mechanisms must be established to maintain communication among and between all parties.

Mutual Trust. The introduction of change through the adoption of a total organizational renewal technical assistance effort bears a large degree of professional risk to the initiator(s). This is particularly true in the large city school system environment where there may be general agreement among critical authorities and special interest groups as to the need for substantive change but a paralyzing disagreement as to direction, pace, or substance of the change.

Much change occurs in city school systems but rarely are they those changes which satisfy the core of the problems being addressed. Innovators and "reformers" have been seen to come and go from leadership positions with but little real change having occurred. Consultants and "helpers" have been paraded through these bureaucracies leaving trails of training institutes, technical reports, and program recommendations. The initiation of a directed course of action focused upon bringing about substantive change to such a system poses a threat to organizational stability and to the security of incumbent professionals. The risks to the internal change agent range from being labeled negatively as a "reformer," to being ostracized by individuals/groups within the school system and from being sued to being fired. As these risks become apparent and are realized, the trust bond between client and technical assistance provider must be continually reinforced. Mutual trust is the very lifeblood of a renewal-oriented, long-term technical assistance project.

Sanction. Any organization renewal within an urban school system's special education unit has very definite implications for other services offered by the school system. At the same time, as suggested earlier, major administrative and/or programmatic change within any LEA's special education unit, and most particularly that of a large city, has very important effects upon the respective SEA's ability to monitor and assist that LEA. This reality, in addition to above-mentioned organizational tensions generated when change occurs, requires that approval for a technical assistance project of the focus and scope suggested be obtained from the highest levels of both the SEA and the LEA; e.g., Commissioner of Education, State Director of Special Education; Superintendent of Schools, Director of Special Education.

Technical assistance goals and approaches, action priorities, employment of the primary technical assistance provider (project director), and support/logistical understandings must have the investment of both systems' leaders. This level of approval becomes particularly important as changes take place in the leadership of the agencies or as the focus of activity becomes centered upon such areas as pre-referral problem intervention documentation, pre-vocational education opportunities, and programs for children of limited English-speaking ability.

Responsive/Proactive Role. A technical assistance system must be responsive to client needs. External technical assistance implies extra energy, extra resources to be applied to a given task or problem arena. It is often the ability of the technical assistance provider to offer that something "extra" - attention, expertise, manpower, material, equipment - to a client in need that makes the difference between meeting change objectives or not meeting them. Day-to-day competing pressures can easily shift the attention of the client away from those mutually agreed upon priority objectives which promise more long range relief. At times, then, the ability to use project resources flexibly, to give aid to a client on a matter only tangentially associated with a project objective allows the client to, in fact, maintain the change objective as a priority focus.

At the same time, a technical assistance system is proactive; often bringing a client to recognition of and action upon critical need areas. These very basic characteristics imply that,

while there are established 'at minimum' goals and objectives, changes in strategy and activities — and possibly the addition/deletion of some project goals and objectives — may be and usually are required as implementation proceeds. The dynamic nature of the client organization demands such flexibility.

With regard to large urban school districts, the one single truth which has emerged from those who have worked for or with these agencies is the unstable nature of most change. Change must, therefore, be planned on an incremental, step-by-step basis; and, preparedness for reprogramming of change strategies must be a well-understood operational standard.

Evaluation. Evaluation is undoubtedly one of the most necessary yet complex factors surrounding the provision of technical assistance. Particularly when a technical assistance effort is directed at total organizational renewal, assessment of the direct impact of the technical assistance effort becomes very difficult. For example, politics and/or litigation often set action priorities in a large city. Change recommendations generated from the efforts of a technical assistance system are sometimes implemented or ignored because of such other variables. For such reasons, minimum goal and objective attainment must be very well defined in the technical assistance design and agreed to by all parties. In effect such specificity reflects a posture of "no matter what else happens, these goals and objectives will be met."

As stated earlier, technical assistance is a dynamic rather than a static intervention system; able to accommodate newly identified client needs as well as unanticipated variables. Very often, therefore, an effort's goals, objectives, and activities become the necessary subject of a redesign or a reordering requirement. The adopted evaluation process must be capable of capturing and accommodating such changes.

Consistency of Approach. If little else is predictable within a client organization, the focus, availability, and approach of the technical assistance effort must be. The demand for such predictability is most particularly critical when working with a client organization experiencing a real or perceived lack of control over events or direction. Such predictability is most easily provided by the adoption of and adherence to a well-defined technical assistance process. The accomplishment of an effective evaluation of the impact of a technical assistance effort also demands a consistent approach to decision making, resource allocation, and task/strategy (re)definition.

Visibility. Regardless of 'authorship', the ownership for intended and/or resultant change within a client organization must remain with the client organization and its leadership. Technical assistance systems are temporary, albeit sometimes long-term, interventions initiated to provide specialized help to a client on a specific or general problem arena. As with most 'help', technical assistance is generally more limited in its effect when there is a seeming takeover of both problem and resolution. Credit for identifying the former and causing/not causing the latter necessarily must remain with the client. The supportive and temporary nature of technical assistance requires a focus on internal capacity building for problem identification/solving. A high visibility approach to technical assistance risks the development of an organizational dependency upon external systems.

APPENDIX

**Boston Public Schools
Department of Special Services**

**Master Plan Component D
Renewal Targets and Cycle Specifications**

RENEWAL TARGETS AND CYCLE SPECIFICATIONS

TARGET		FREQUENCY	79-80	80-81	81-82	82-83	83-84
A. Mission, Goals & Objective Renewal							
1. Basic Tenets (Beliefs, Understandings)	3 years		R			JL	
2. Organizational Mission	2 years		Ⓡ		Ⓡ		Ⓡ
3. Organizational Goals	2 years		Ⓡ		Ⓡ		Ⓡ
4. Objectives by Goal	1 year		Ⓡ	JL	Ⓡ	JL	Ⓡ
5. Area Goals	1 year		Ⓡ	JL	Ⓡ	JL	Ⓡ
6. Area Objectives by Goal	6 months		JL	JL	JL	JL	JL
7. Unit Goals	1 year		Ⓡ	JL	Ⓡ	JL	Ⓡ
8. Unit Objectives by Goal	3 months		Ⓡ J A	Ⓡ J A JL	Ⓡ J A	Ⓡ J A JL	Ⓡ J A
B. Organizational Structure & Management Renewal							
1. Organizational Policy Renewal	1 year		Ⓡ	Ⓡ	Ⓡ	Ⓡ	Ⓡ
2. Structural Organization							
• Overall	1 year		R	JL	R	JL	R
• By Area	6 months		JL	JL	JL	JL	JL
• By Unit	3 months		Ⓡ J A	Ⓡ J A JL	Ⓡ J A	Ⓡ J A JL	Ⓡ J A
3. Organizational Sub-Systems							
• Organizational Evaluation	6 months		JL	JL	JL	JL	JL
• Management, Coordination and Supervision	3 months		Ⓡ J A	Ⓡ J A JL	Ⓡ J A	Ⓡ J A JL	Ⓡ J A
• Personnel Recruitment and Evaluation	3 months		Ⓡ J A	Ⓡ J A JL	Ⓡ J A	Ⓡ J A JL	Ⓡ J A
• Budget and Fiscal Management	3 months		Ⓡ J A	Ⓡ J A JL	Ⓡ J A	Ⓡ J A JL	Ⓡ J A
• Physical Plant Planning	6 months		Ⓡ A	Ⓡ A	Ⓡ A	Ⓡ A	Ⓡ A
• Internal and External Information and Awareness	6 months		Ⓡ A	Ⓡ A	Ⓡ A	Ⓡ A	Ⓡ A
• Transportation	6 months		JL	JL	JL	JL	JL
• Staff Development and Training	3 months		Ⓡ J A	Ⓡ J A JL	Ⓡ J A	Ⓡ J A JL	Ⓡ J A
• Management Information System	6 months		JL	JL	JL	JL	JL
• Clerical Support	6 months		JL	JL	JL	JL	JL
C. Service Delivery System Renewal							
• Continuous Model Program Definition and Program Development Planning	3 months		Ⓡ J A	Ⓡ J A JL	Ⓡ J A	Ⓡ J A JL	Ⓡ J A

O — October
 J — January
 A — April
 JL — July

○ Circle indicates a new/updated plan is due.